

WHITE WALL

GALLERY

and yet, Green

Karim Ahmed Khan

ABOUT US:

White Wall intends to showcase the art practice of some of the most influential artists today and contribute to scholarship by producing catalogues and eventually books to accompany exhibitions.

We aim to invite artists with sustained practices, prominent curators, historians and writers to collaborate and promote research and address the wider discourse on art, its prevalence, evolution and role in our lives. Taking this purpose forward, workshops will be conducted by our exhibiting artists with the purpose of actively contributing to education, connection, inclusion and collaboration with the multiple layers of our communal ecology.

BIOGRAPHY – KARIM AHMED KHAN

Karim Ahmed Khan, a visual artist with an honors degree in Fine Arts from the National College of Arts, Lahore (2015), has made significant contributions to both national and international art scenes. He taught sculpture at the National College of Arts for six years and has participated in numerous solo/group exhibitions worldwide. Khan has been recognized with the ADA Art Award 3D category and ADA Environmental Leadership Award in 2025, also Arjumand Painting Prize in 2021 and was a nominee for the Sovereign Asian Art Prize the same year. His recent accolades include winning the Nigaah Art Award 2024 in the landscape category. His work has been showcased at Lahore Biennale 03 and was part of Agha Khan Gallery Centre in London, the Pakistan Pavilion at the Dubai Expo 2022, and several esteemed galleries in Pakistan such as Canvas Gallery, O Art Space, Koel Gallery, and Alhamra Art Gallery. Khan was also part of Lahore Biennale 03.

Drawing inspiration from his experiences living in the mountainous Hunza Valley, Khan's art addresses themes of deforestation and global warming. His creative journey began with three-dimensional sculptural installations before transitioning to two-dimensional drawings. Charcoal, his primary medium, serves as a metaphor for the life cycle and the process of transformation, reflecting the volatile nature of its creation from trees. Influenced by miniature painting techniques, he layers his drawings and incorporates gouache on Wasli and paper. Recently, his work has evolved to feature minimalistic depictions of new life, such as sprouting leaves and flowers from burned trees, symbolizing nature's resilience and potential for regeneration.

Khan operates a studio in Hunza Valley and manages a contemporary gallery housed in a historic 900-year-old building in Ghulkin, Hunza Valley.

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My current body of work investigates deforestation and global warming. My earlier works were three-dimensional sculptural installations that later transformed into two-dimensional drawings on paper. My chosen medium, charcoal, reflects these concerns as it is a by-product of a volatile process in itself. Acting as a metaphor for the life cycle, I use charcoal to depict the very material it is created from: trees. I have been inspired by the techniques of miniature painting, developing my works in layers and adding gouache to my drawings on wasli and paper. I paint sprouting leaves and flowers as a metaphor for the potential in nature.

In the past couple of years, the world endured several natural and human inflicted calamities in the form of climate change. While making these works, I was reading and thinking about the Australian bushfire, the Israel-Palestine war, the Afghanistan war, the pandemic as well as the Russia-Ukraine war. Reading the news often made me feel as if the world will soon come to an end. As Christine Caine states, 'Sometimes when you are in a dark place you think you have been buried, but you have been planted.' I felt I required patience and strength to develop hope and positivity to keep moving forward. I believe that a slight change in our perceptions causes manifold changes in our actions. My work acknowledges that Mother Nature has a unique ability to heal in itself, and this remarkable power extends itself to humans. We have the capability to recover and repair. Fissures are used as metaphors in my work, borrowing from Rumi's idea of wounds being spaces where light can enter your soul. Thus, we need to appreciate this process of healing and be optimistic that the world too will recover soon and that our visuals can be ways for us to access this healing.

Karim Ahmed Khan

Artist

Begin afresh, afresh...

In the corner of my garden lives a pomegranate tree quietly growing next to a sweet pea vine, a lime tree, a citrus tree and shaded by towering date palm. This winter, though, was the first time I noticed how truly bare these fruit-bearing trees can be during their seasonal hibernation.

Last December, as I stepped up to inspect the pomegranate tree, I saw, as if with new eyes, how withered the winter branches are, how bare and spare, spreading in various directions like veins on emaciated, aged hands. It looked old. Old—yet, it is barely more than an infant, only three years since it was planted. No further attention was paid till a few weeks ago, when a green glint caught my eye, and stopped me in my tracks.

Leaves.

Or, rather, the beginning of them. A late afternoon spring sun was bouncing its rays off impossibly small leaves that had pushed themselves out of empty branches, covering the tree in blink-and you-miss it foliage. On a chilly February evening, the pomegranate tree decided it needed to teach me the miracle of life anew. Much is made of the miracle of animal life; more should be made of the miracle of plant life, as it is hard not to be entranced by this most elemental process once you begin to look. Now imagine, what a forest can do.

It is no surprise then that Karim Ahmed Khan, who comes from a land of ancient forests, has a practice that is so deeply attuned to the life cycle of trees, a practice that is moved by the destruction of this life through manmade means. And one that seeks to find meaning and magic amidst this chaos.

I first came across Karim's work at the Lahore Biennale 03 (2024). A solitary fragile hand of a branch reached out across a white background. What I initially mistook for a photographic study turned out to be a charcoal one. It hung against barren concrete walls—the scene reminiscent of a dystopian room where the remnants of a prior civilisation and its plant life are only found in art. A piece framed as a promise of future and return.

And Yet, Green showcases his continued preoccupation with the arboreal world: its birth, its natural and unnatural demise, its resurrection. Karim is particularly sensitive to the plight of our forests, whether through direct human-led deforestation or as a result of climate change. This current body of work is an exhortation to reassess our role in this destruction and contemplate a return to more harmonious modes of co-existence with the natural world around us.

His site specific installations in Hunza, for instance, where he materially forges connections between decaying and upright trees through delicate wires and threads, depict the fragility of the ecosystem and our place in it. Looking at the photographs of these works, which are being displayed as part of this solo show, I am also reminded of how trees 'converse' with one another and 'care' for each other using underground mycelial networks—a fact we have only recently begun to fully understand, thanks to the work of forest ecologist Suzanne Simard. Karim's tree-thread installations and sculptures, a nod to his earlier training in sculpting, become two-pronged then: a warning to reconsider our precarious balance with nature, and a vision of the healing power of nature, not just figuratively, but quite literally as well.

The works on paper, which form the majority of the show, expand upon the artist's meditative concerns. Created primarily using charcoal, with gouache making an occasional appearance, they are depictions of distinctly characteristic branches, leaves and twigs, echoing the visual and conceptual vocabulary of the work I initially encountered at the 2024 Biennale. Some of the pieces are of solitary branches, plaintively suspended in stasis, while others are of scattered twigs and leaves. Karim renders these in an almost clinical manner; the effect is one of profound loss and grief. Viewing these works is akin to looking at carefully arranged forensic displays of archaeo anthropological objects—or criminal evidence. The crime: wilful ecological destruction. There is also a layer of reverent curiosity at work here. Karim's broken twigs, empty branches and wilting leaves also recall scavenged, foraged objects—the sort that you collect while walking through a forest and proudly display on your dinner table. What is worrying is that they could very easily represent reliquaries in a dystopian future devoid of our arboreal companions.

However, Karim's is not a body of work without hope. The couple of works that depict leaves sprouting on branches further signify this hope; they spotlight the miracle of life that so transfixed me in my own garden, and the healing and revivification properties of nature that occupy the artist's mind, pointing towards a future that can still be reclaimed from the clutches of runaway capitalism.

Using trees as a motif to explore his concerns allows the artist to make emphatic statements about the global catastrophes in the wake of climate change. Their significance in various cultures, mythologies and literatures is widespread: from Yggdrasil to the Eden Tree of Knowledge; from Tolkien's White Tree of Gondor to the Han Kang's Yeong-hye's tree transformation; from Japanese Shinrin-yoku to Scandinavian Friluftsliv. Simply put: trees represent life, their absence, death.

Karim Ahmed Khan in this show implores us to reckon with our participation in the ongoing assault on nature. There is helplessness in the aftermath of violence, but there is also hope in the reversal of our misfortunes. As I look to the pomegranate tree in my garden, now dense with foliage, teeming with life (seen and unseen), I think of these words by Larkin:

Begin afresh, afresh, afresh

Hassan Tahir Latif

04.2026



Black Branch and White Sky I | Charcoal on Canson Paper | 48 x 70 inches | 2025-26





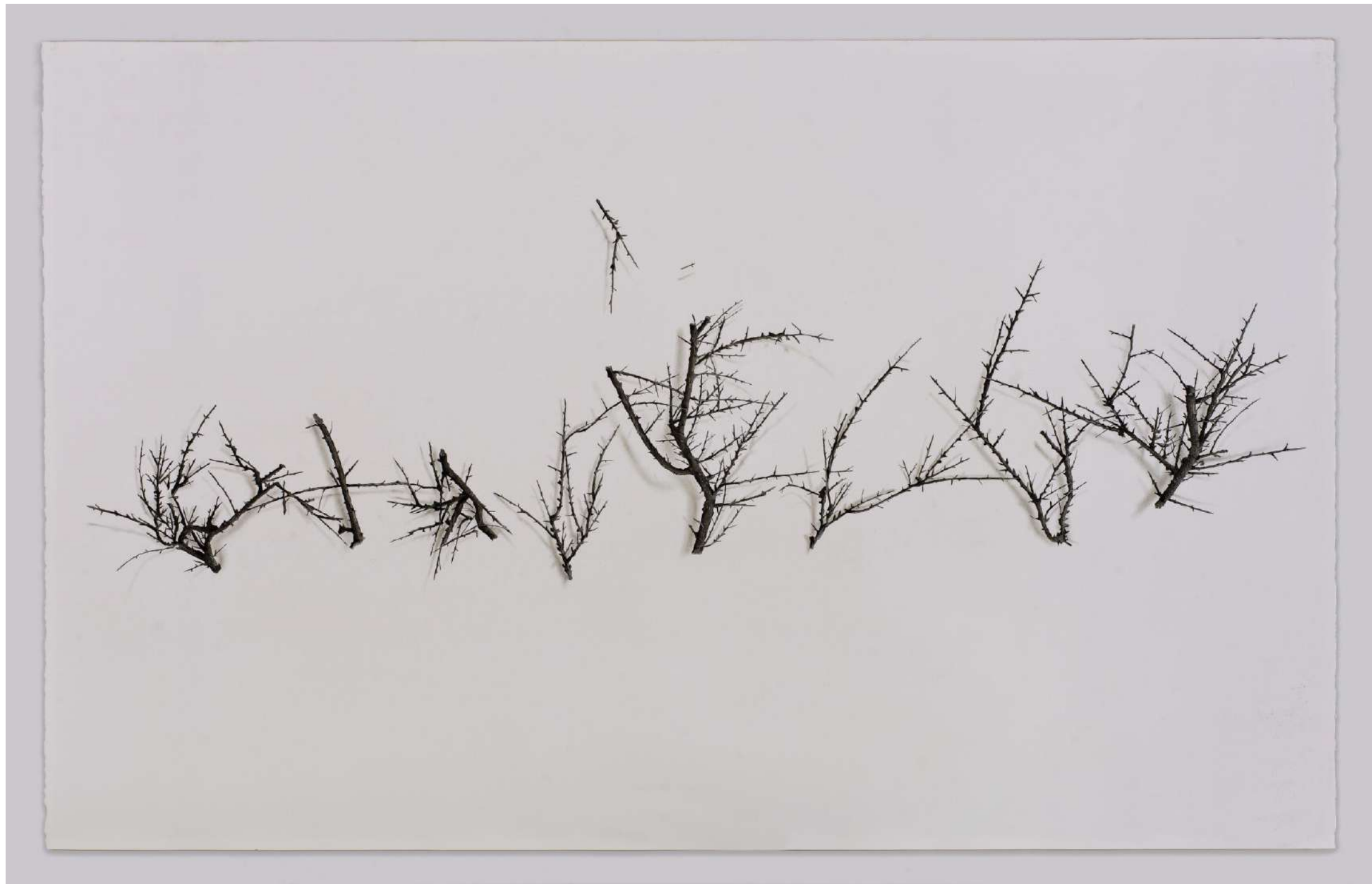
Black Branch and White Sky II | Charcoal and Gouache on Arches Paper | 45 x 82 inches | 2025-26





What the Ground Remembers | Charcoal and Gouache on Arches Paper | 31 x 44 inches | 2025-26





Landscape | Charcoal on Arches Paper | 28 x 45 inches | 2025-26



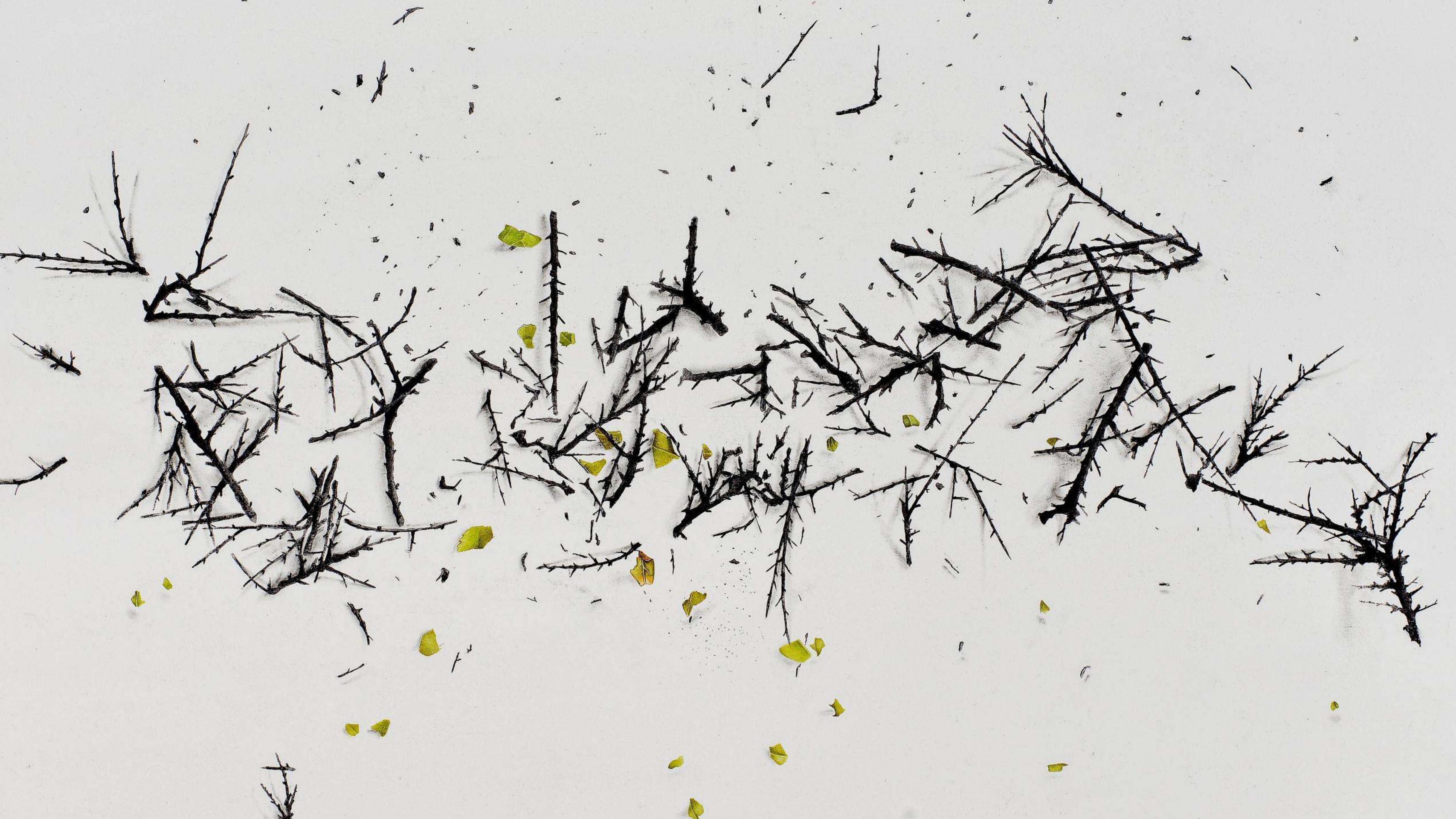


Still, this Small Color | Charcoal and Gouache on Arches Paper | 25 x 45 inches | 2025-26





Life Again | Charcoal and Gouache on Arches Paper | 22 x 30 inches | 2025-26





Coal and Leaf | Charcoal on Arches Paper | 22 x 30 inches | 2025-26





Twigs that Kept | Charcoal and Gouache on Arches Paper | 24.5 x 37.5 inches | 2025-26





One Living Twig | Charcoal and Gouache on Arches Paper | 24.5 x 37.5 inches | 2025-26





Burn and the Bloom | Charcoal and Gouache on Arches Paper | 24.5 x 37.5 inches | 2025-26





What Broke, Still Breathes I | Charcoal and Gouache on Arches Paper | 30 x 23 inches | 2025-26



What Broke, Still Breathes II | Charcoal and Gouache on Arches Paper | 30 x 23 inches | 2025-26



Still Tied | Threads and Glue between Dead Trees | 84 x 22 x 52 inches | 2025-26



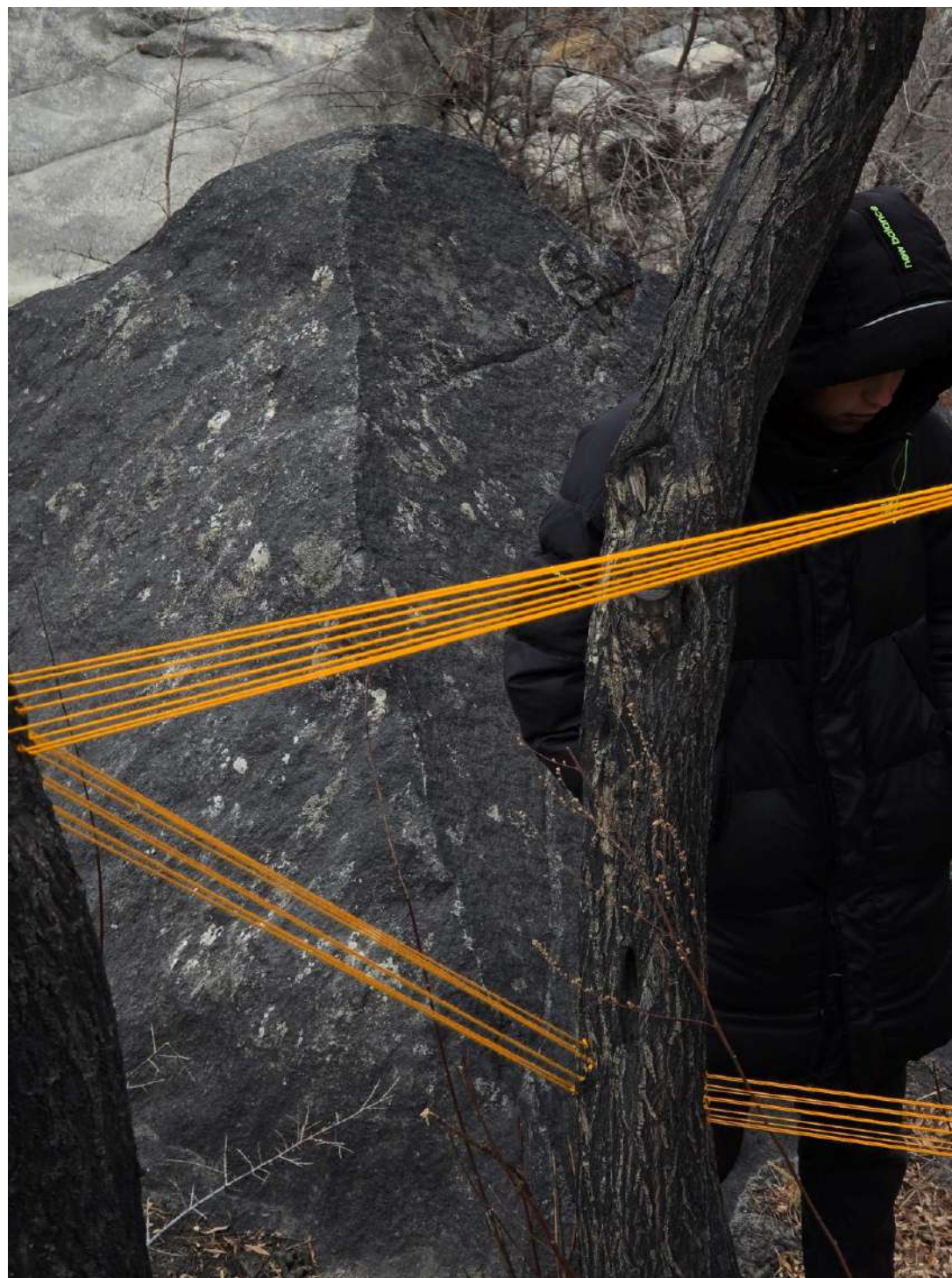
Still Life I | Thread, Wires and Glue between Trees | Fine Art Inkjet on Hahnemuehle Photo Rag | Edition Length 5 | 3.5 x 5 inches | 2025-26



Still Life II | Thread, Wires and Glue between Trees | Fine Art Inkjet on Hahnemuehle Photo Rag | Edition Length 5 | 3.5 x 5 inches | 2025-26



Frozen Lights | Thread, Wires and Glue between Trees | Fine Art Inkjet on Hahnemuehle Photo Rag | Edition Length 5 | 4 x 6 inches | 2025-26



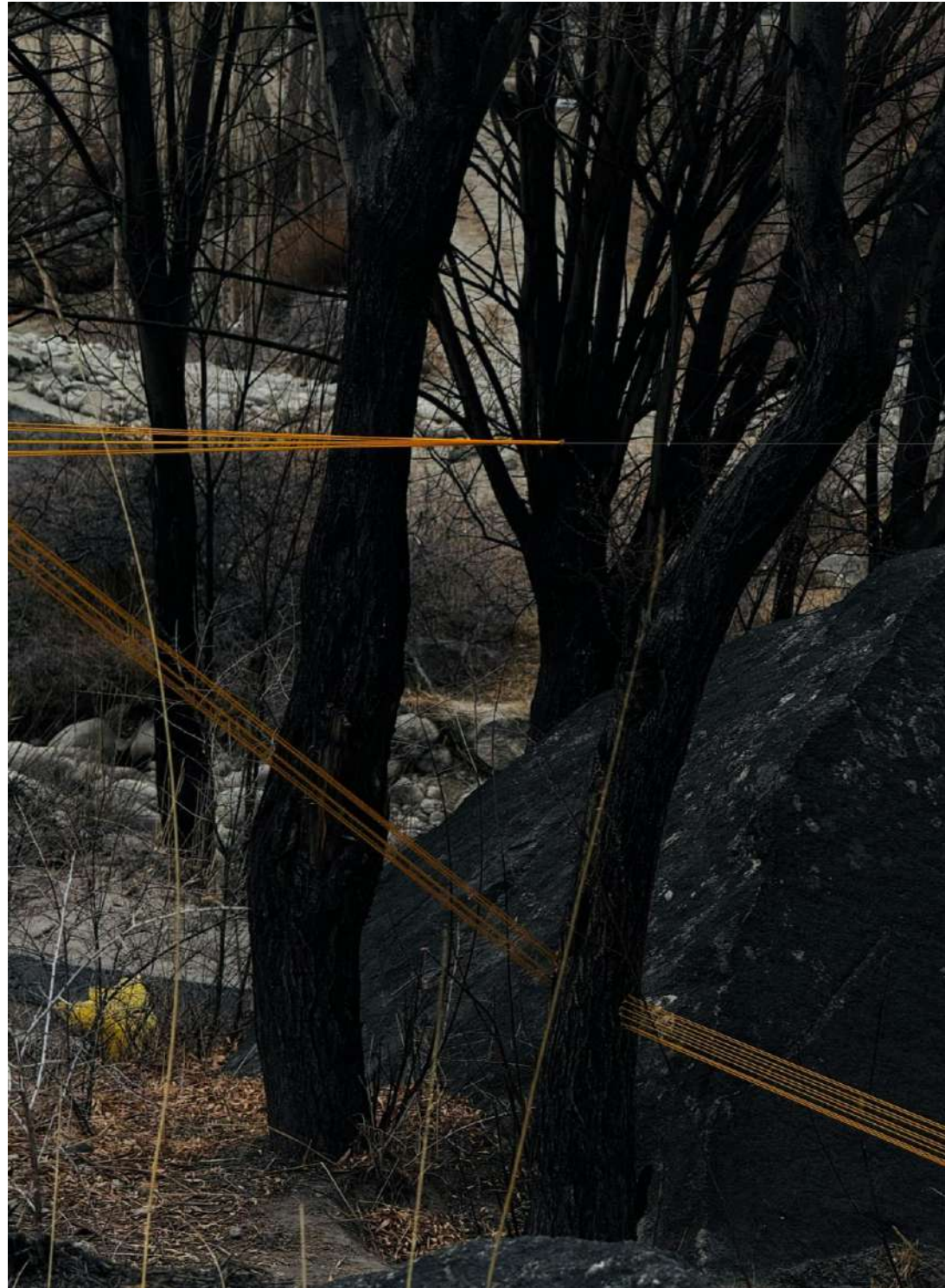
Light in the Branches I | Thread between Trees | Fine Art Inkjet on Hahnemuehle Photo Rag | Edition Length 5 | 6 x 4 inches | 2025-26



Light in the Branches II | Thread between Trees | Fine Art Inkjet on Hahnemuehle Photo Rag | Edition Length 5 | 6 x 4 inches | 2025-26



Light in the Branches III | Thread between Trees | Fine Art Inkjet on Hahnemuehle Photo Rag | Edition Length 5 | 6 x 4 inches | 2025-26



Light in the Branches IV | Thread between Trees | Fine Art Inkjet on Hahnemuehle Photo Rag | Edition Length 5 | 6 x 4 inches | 2025-26



Light in the Branches VI | Thread between Trees | Fine Art Inkjet on Hahnemuehle Photo Rag | Edition Length 5 | 6 x 4 inches | 2025-26

SPECIAL THANKS

Hassan Tahir Latif

LAMA

WHITE WALL TEAM

Ejaz Saeed

Sajid Khan

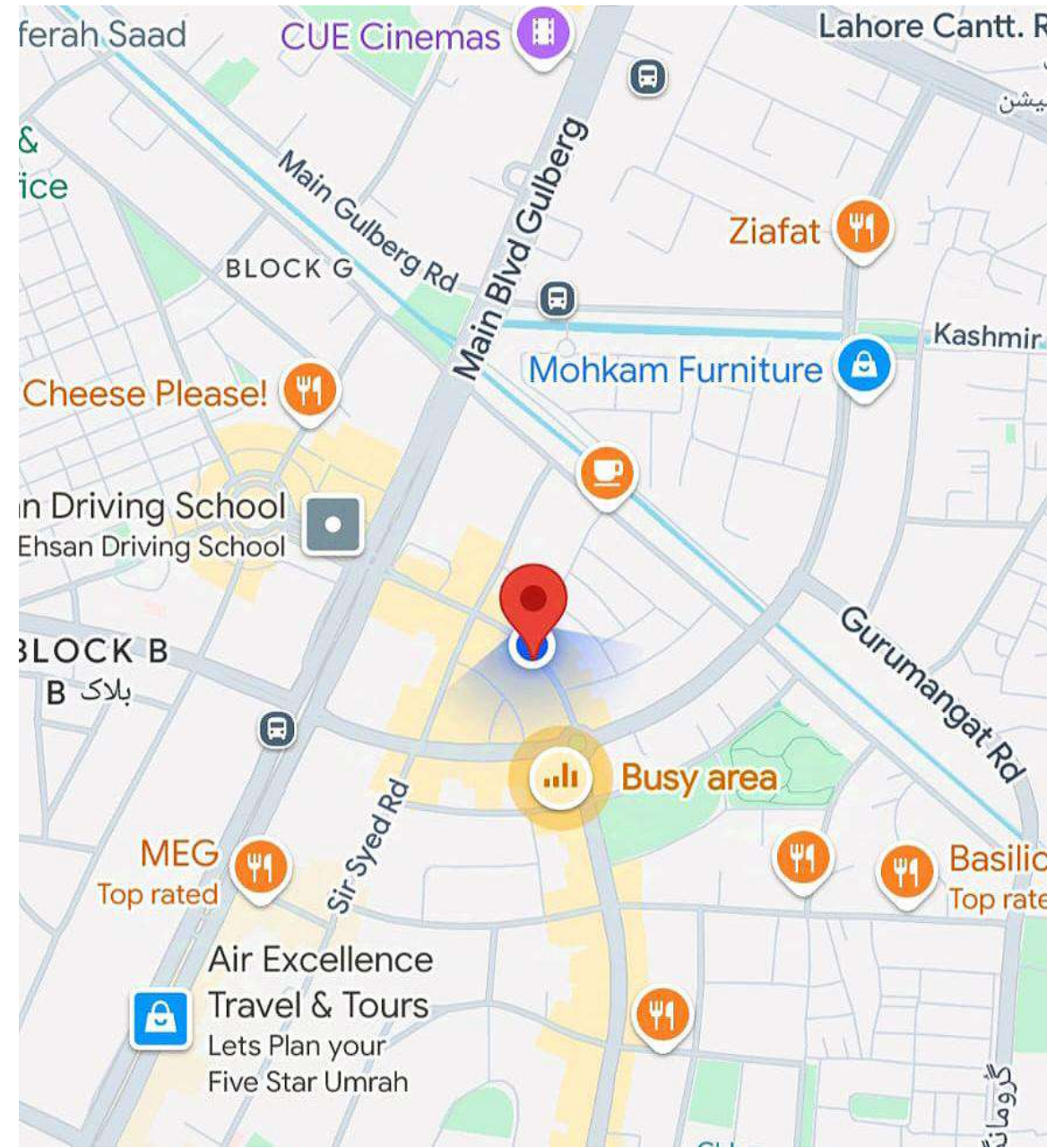
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